Problem: In a remote rural community, less than 10% of households have access to the broadband. Students, job seekers and entrepreneurs are at a distinct disadvantage when competing against communities where most if not all residents have access to broadband Internet. Limited or no access results in a population that is not only disadvantage in their current knowledge and skills, they are excluded from the very tools that would help achieve parity. This lack of computer knowledge and broadband utilization increases the technology and market isolation of the Tribal community already suffering from chronic unemployment and poverty. Solution: Provide public computer access throughout the rural community supported by training on how to use computers, software programs and valuable search engines (digital literacy training). The result will be a community that is computer literate, and a workforce that is job-ready and business-ready. This project is will be managed through the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) which represents the 70% of the population that is Native American. The programs provided through the Public Computer Centers will be open and available to all residents in the area. Without Federal funding, this solution cannot be attained. The Colville Tribal Community: The Colville Tribes is a confederation of 12 tribes of Native Americans living in North Central Washington, in seven counties, including Ferry and Okanogan Counties, the two poorest counties in Washington State, occupying 1.4 million acres. The tribe is organized into 4 districts: Omak, Nespelem, Keller and Inchelium. The Reservation has a population of approximately 10,000 residents, 7000 of whom are enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. There are 2700 households on the reservation. Population density is 1/5 that of Western Washington at 3.6 persons per square mile on the Reservation. Family median income in 2000 was 47% of Washington State family median income and over 25% of American Indians on the reservation live below poverty. There are approximately 200 businesses on the Reservation. Population Served Annually: The Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT throughout) proposes funding for 15 public computer centers. These computer centers will be housed in the regional community center buildings, libraries, a senior center and public schools. CCT will be purchasing 100 computers for the public computer centers, mostly desktops, some laptop computers. CCT projects the centers' computers will serve 250 tribal residents weekly, 1,000 a month, and thus 12,000 users per year. Through the local newspapers, public service announcements, flyers, bulletin board notices, and other sources of information, CCT will work to reach all 2700 households and 200 businesses about the digital literacy and adoption programs administered through the Public Computer Centers (PCC). CCT estimates 200 residents will sign up monthly for digital literacy programs, totaling 2400 digital literacy students annually. Public Computer Center Programs The public computer centers will be a community resource center where residents can go to be linked to the
Internet, to communicate with family members, to learn computing skills, to build resumes, do job searches, attain or upgrade professional certifications, become job-ready, to build a business, apply for licenses, and to improve self-esteem and participate in the larger economy of the global market. Programs will be set up (defined as digital literacy) to provide users with basic, intermediate, and advanced knowledge of computing, of software applications, and how to access key Internet resource bases. CCT, using employment training public and private auspices, will focus on programs to assist workers with worker transition training, resume building, and job search engines and strategies. In addition, the Programs will work with business development and technical assistance organizations to provide entrepreneurial courses and technical assistance through distance learning linkups with the Small Business Administration and colleges and universities. The Public Computer Centers will also work in the educational realm with professional associations to help with continuing education and professional certification courses. Qualifications & Partnerships: Program Coordinators will be facilitate the deployment of the PCCs with two key governmental entities: the newly created Confederated Colville Tribe Network (CCTNet) and the CCT Information Technology Department. Program Coordinators will also coordinate deployment and annual planning with the Tribe's community centers, schools, libraries, senior service and Headstart service programs. CCTNet will be seeking financial assistance and mentorship partnerships with the community's businesses. The Tribe will be reaching out to cyber education companies to help provide teaching curriculum, teaching materials, and teaching training assistance. And finally, CCT will be reaching out to philanthropic organizations such as the Gates Foundation and local colleges and universities to help finance the sustainability of the public computer centers as well as help with distance learning projects. Measurable results: Computer Center Managers shall keep a record of center usage, types of services provided and used at each Center, direct services rendered, outcome of assistance efforts, and an informal polling of customer satisfaction of computing use and for assistance provided. Organization: CCT Business Council will create a Planning Board of Directors to guide and oversee the direction of the PCC program. Representatives from Council, CCTNet, the IT department, library systems, community services center, schools, youth development group or organization, private sector, and higher education representative, and a philanthropic organization will be recruited to sit on the board. CCT will administer the program through the Confederated Colville Tribe Network, LLC (CCTNet). Computing: CCT will apply for funding for computers, for computing hardware accessories, for software, for wifi transmitters, for computer teaching programs, and for laboratory equipment such as furniture, data storage systems, security software programs, physical security devices, power circuit upgrades, air conditioning and venting upgrades, and management software system to track and plan computer center usage. Budget: The overall project budget is $400K to pay for 15 Public Computer Centers located in 4 districts in the Tribal community. CCT is asking the Department of Commerce for $320K in grants, and CCT will provide $80K cash to match the funding request. CCT is also providing in-kind donation for the facility space and overhead utility expenses.